

res. 7574.5 v.2 no.7



"RELIEVE THE OPPRESSED."

A SERMON

PREACHED

In the Parish Church of West Bromwich,

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1825,

ON THE DUTY OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY
TOWARDS THEIR FELLOW-SUBJECTS,

THE

BRITISH NEGRO SLAVES

BY CHARLES TOWNSEND, A. M.

RECTOR OF CALSTONE, WILTS.
AND PERPETUAL CURATE OF WEST BROMWICH, IN THE
COUNTY OF STAFFORD.

And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear.

Genesis xlii. 21:

THIRD EDITION.

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1830.

res. 7574.5 v 2 no. 7

TO

THOMAS CLARKSON,

THE FRIEND OF HUMANITY, THE ENEMY OF OPPRESSION,

THE DEVOTED, INTREPID, UNWEARIED ASSERTOR

OF THE RIGHTS

OF THE INJURED SONS OF AFRICA,

THIS HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO SERVE THE CAUSE

TO WHICH HIS LIFE AND TALENTS HAVE BEEN CONSECRATED,

IS INSCRIBED,

IN TOKEN OF THE SINCEREST RESPECT, REGARD, AND ESTEEM,

BY HIS VERY FAITHFUL SERVANT.

CHARLES TOWNSEND.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION.

Happy should I have been, if it could be said with truth, that a Sermon preached on the subject of Negro Slavery so long as five years ago must, by this time, be *out of date*, in consequence of the improved condition of our enslaved fellow-subjects, and the progress made towards their ultimate enfranchisement. So far, however, is this from being the case, that both the law and the practice of Colonial slavery continue to this hour (with few and slight exceptions) as iniquitous and inhuman as ever; and advancement towards final emancipation there is, and has been, none. The proceedings of the Local Legislatures, and particularly the re-enactment of the disallowed Slave Act, by the Jamaica House of Assembly, without a tittle of amendment, evinces too clearly the unalterable determination of the Colonists to resist to the utmost the will of the Mother Country for the deliverance of the victims of their oppression, and to do nothing effectual either for the bettering of their present condition, or for their eventual restoration to freedom.

Neither must it be forgotten, that if the recommendations of Government and the Imperial Parliament in 1823, instead of having been contumaciously rejected by those to whose approval they were *submitted*, had been adopted, and acted upon, in their fullest extent, still *absolutely nothing* would have been done thereby towards fixing a date (however remote) for the *termination* of Slavery in the Dependencies of the British Crown. It is a lamentable truth—and a truth which no Englishman, worthy the name, can reflect upon without feelings of humiliation, grief, and shame, that for aught which the Government of this country has yet done, or proposed to do, slavery, injustice, and oppression, may be perpetuated in every one of our West India Colonies, chartered or unchartered, *to the end of time*.

JANUARY 16, 1830.

C. T.

A SERMON.

ISAIAH I. 17.

RELIEVE THE OPPRESSED.

IF the duty of mutual admonition be a duty which *every* member of the household of God on earth is bound, on proper occasions to fulfil, it must certainly be one which presses with peculiar weight on those who are set as Watchmen in Israel, under an especial commission to show the people of the Lord their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. It must be at the peril of their own souls, that persons invested with this high trust, ever "suffer sin upon their neighbour" unrebuked, even though the sin so passed over, should merely be one of thoughtlessness, ignorance, or inadvertence; and therefore differing widely from the greater sins of wilfulness and presumption. The people of the Lord are to be a holy people; holy in heart and holy in act; "unblameable, and unprovable in his sight." These weighty considerations, my brethren, if I were uninfluenced by any other, would of themselves suffice to impel me to address you at this time on the subject of a duty to which, in one

particular instance,—and an instance of the first importance—we have most of us been too long wholly inattentive. But there is also another consideration, independent of those I have now adverted to, which would strongly incline me to offer the same subject to your serious attention; and that is, the *possibility*, at least, that some service however slender, may thereby be rendered to the victims of as grievous an oppression as this world of sin and suffering ever witnessed; an oppression too, which the inhabitants of this land, whether they know it or not, are lending themselves to uphold; while, by little more than the simple declaration of their will, it might certainly, and speedily, be removed for ever. They who know this must be without excuse before God, if they fail to do all that in them lies, whether that all be little or much, to assert the injured rights of humanity and justice; and they who know it not have need to be put in immediate possession of the truth, both for their own sakes, and for the sake of the unhappy beings whom their better information may then dispose them not merely to commiserate, but, as far as they are able, to succour and relieve.

The two subjects of inquiry, then, to which I would earnestly beg your attention are these: *First*, Is it a demonstrable fact that there does exist under the sufferance, and the direct encouragement, of the people of this country, any such flagrant case of oppression as that which has now been referred to?—And, *Secondly*, If it appear to be an incontrovertible fact, that such a case of oppression does exist, then, what is the line of conduct which, under present circumstances, it becomes our duty to pursue?

In order to arrive at a just conclusion on the first of these inquiries, we must turn our eyes towards those regions of the western world where upwards of seven hundred thousand* of our fellow-subjects are held in a state of servile bondage by persons calling themselves their *owners*, and claiming in them the same right of property which they have in the chattels, of whatever kind, which they are legally and equitably possessed of. In entering on the nearer survey of the extraordinary phenomenon presented to us in a state of things so directly at variance with every principle of the civil and religious institutions of this free and Christian country, it may be necessary to premise, that the system of Colonial Slavery is not precisely the same, in all respects, throughout *the whole* of the British dominions in Western India. In a few of the smaller islands, some of the harsher features of that system are, to a certain degree, softened and corrected, though still sufficiently marked with their original deformity to shock the feelings of every man not wholly insensible to the honour and the happiness of his species. Of these cases of partial mitigation more particular mention shall be made hereafter.

The description that will now be set before you of the generally prevailing character of the degrading bondage to which the great majority of the slave-population in our foreign Dependencies are to this day subjected, shall not be taken from the statements and representations of the adversaries of the system; but

* At the Cape, and the Mauritius, are above one hundred thousand more.

from the statements and admissions of its avowed *apologists* and *defenders*. There can be no cause, therefore, to apprehend that the portrait will be depicted under a more frightful form than that which properly belongs to it. To attempt to shade it in darker colours than its own were a needless task indeed !

From the concurrent testimony, then, of the friends and advocates of Colonial slavery, and from the daily practices which they undertake to defend and justify, we find that the slaves are held to be the *absolute property* of their owners;* that they are considered in the light of mere instruments of profit, liable to be disposed of, and dealt by, in almost all respects, as the beasts of the field, for the benefit of their possessors.‡ Like beasts they are, many of them, *branded* in different parts of their body with whatever marks the caprice, or cruelty, of their masters may direct.‡ Like beasts they are exposed, either in lots or separately,‡ to *public sale*, without regard to the rending asunder any ties of consanguinity; or to the anguish of soul which the unoffending victims may endure, in being torn away for ever from the objects of their dearest affections. Like beasts they are made to *work under the lash without wages*,† by night and by day; and under the lash they may expire, with scarcely the remotest probability that the arm of justice will ever, in this world, overtake their murderers.|| The value set upon their lives,

* See note A. Appendix.

‡ See the Colonial Gazettes, *passim*; and particularly the Jamaica Royal Gazette from the 11th to the 18th of June, 1825.

† See Note B.

|| See Note C.

and the guilt incurred by the wilful destruction of them, are estimated, not on the principle which would recognize their participation in one common nature with the rest of mankind, viz. "Whoso sheddeth *man's* blood, by man shall his blood be shed," (Gen. ix. 6,) but on a principle which regards them as an inferior order in the creation, raised but little, if at all, above the brutes, and but little more entitled than the brutes to the benefit of legal protection. § In one of the Islands, || if a master stand fully convicted of the crime of wilfully killing or destroying his own slave, his guilt is to be expiated by the payment of a small pecuniary fine.* And, lest even this punishment should be too heavy for the venial offence he has committed, he is screened effectually against the infliction of it by the inadmissibility of slave-evidence against the privileged class he belongs to.** If a thousand slaves were eye-witnesses of the barbarous violence which dismissed any one of their fellows to an untimely grave, their testimony is not to be received against a white; and therefore their brother's blood is left to cry to *heaven* for that avenging justice, the very shadow of which is denied to its cry on earth. And while these wretched outcasts from the pale of humanity are thus entirely dependent on the mercy of their owners, or of their owners' deputy, not for life only, but for much more than life, for exemption from long-protracted torture of body and of mind, their deliverance by manumission, or by any other outlet than the grave, from this

§ See Note D.

* See Note E.

|| Bermuda.

** See Note C.

most miserable state is obstructed* by a variety of burdensome and embarrassing regulations, established by those whose will is law, for the express purpose of perpetuating their bondage. And even after any of them have been actually and formally liberated, they are liable to be reduced to slavery again,† if they are not prepared, whenever called upon, to produce satisfactory proof of their having been raised to the rank of free men.

Such, then, according to the statements and admissions of *the defenders* of Colonial slavery, is that far worse than Egyptian bondage under which nearly a million of our fellow-subjects are still groaning, unhelped, if not unpitied, by their happier brethren in this favoured land of freedom. The outline of the picture is not, indeed, complete: some further traits remain yet to be added to those we have now been contemplating: but, omitting them for the present, are we not irresistibly compelled to declare, even on the showing of the apologists and upholders of the system, that it is justly characterized by the impartial and accurate Paley, as “a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical that ever were tolerated upon the face of the earth.”† It is true, as I just now remarked, that the system is not exactly the same in all points throughout the whole of the British Dependencies which its existence is permitted to disgrace. And it is true also, that the suppression of some of its most flagrant enormities has recently

* See Note F.

† See Note G.

† Moral Philosophy, Book 3. Part 2. Chap. 3.

been forced on *one*‡ of the Settlements by the peremptory orders of the Government of this country. But the sphere, to which this compulsory improvement has been restricted, is an exceedingly confined one;§ the mass of the evil still continues uncorrected, and unre-moved: in the aggregate of its breadth, and depth, and length, and height, there is scarcely any perceptible diminution. At present it may be questioned whether its actual amount be not augmented, rather than diminished, by the defective measures of palliation and experiment which have been adopted with a view to its abatement. The keen resentment of the resident Proprietors, at the curtailment of their unlimited power over their slaves, has led them to throw off all disguise, and proclaim the principle which is to direct their future treatment of these unhappy beings, in language that cannot be mistaken. “Recognized power,” they say, “can afford to be liberal and magnanimous: disputed authority *must necessarily be jealous and severe.*” In reference to the use of the driving whip as a stimulus to labour in the field, they say,† “By those who have most considered the subject in this colony,* the use of the whip is believed to be identified with the existence of slavery. Changes,” they affirm, “are always to be deprecated: especially in a Slave Colony, where” as they ingenuously confess, “*the whole of the labouring population are de-*

‡ Trinidad; containing only twenty-two thousand five hundred slaves, in 1824.

§ See Note H.

† See the Trinidad Gazette of August, 1824.

* Trinidad.

prived of their natural rights, and nothing but the force of habit, and a *brutish*, indistinct, idea of the superiority and fixed power of their masters, keep them in awe and subjection." They then go on to assert, and doubtless on the best authority, "that the lower order of slave-owners are racking their inventions to devise modes of punishment within the letter of the proclamation, to compel their Negroes to perform those services on which their means of subsistence entirely depend;"‡ and which services, it might have been added, they are resolved never to allow to be performed by free men, until they are compelled to allow it by uncontrollable necessity.

Such is the reception which the orders of the home Government have met with in a quarter where an Order in Council has the authority of law. And, in other quarters to which it was judged expedient, that *recommendations* only, and not commands, should be issued, with the same humane intention of meliorating the condition of the slave-population, those recommendations have been received with the same spirit of implacable hostility,* with superadded threats of determined resistance, if an Act of the supreme Legislature should convert the recommendations of Government into the law of the empire. We may judge for ourselves, therefore, how far any substantial benefits have as yet accrued, or are likely to accrue, to British Negro Slaves, from any thing which has yet been done to mitigate the rigours of their oppression.

But, rigorous and inhuman as that oppression is,

‡ Idem.

* See Note I.

under every aspect in which it can be contemplated, the view of it, which, to the Christian mind, is beyond all others, most fearfully appalling, is that which respects its influence on the eternal prospects of its ill-fated, helpless victims. Not only has no adequate provision been made for their moral and religious instruction, but it is of the very essence of the system, under which they are held in bondage, to inure them to the practice of every vice, and to bar up every avenue of their souls against the admission of any sentiment of virtue. § Even their patient endurance of wrongs, marvellous as it is in itself, is scarcely, in their abject circumstances, to be ranked as a virtue : it is rather the torpid sufferance of despair, yielding without a struggle to ills which are beyond a cure.

That the Colonial Slaves are, generally speaking, left utterly destitute of religious instruction, is a truth too fully established to admit of the possibility of a doubt.

Though we had not been assured of the fact by the repeated reference which is made to it in the orders and recommendations of Government,* and by the united testimony of the resident Ministers of the Established Church, in their answers † to the inquiries officially addressed to them ; and though we had not derived from any other source such precise information as should have been directly conclusive on the point, we might yet have been led to form a nearly correct opinion of the actual state of the case from the never to-be-forgotten declaration of the slave-holder, that “ no-

§ See Note K.

* See Note L.

† See Note M.

thing but a brutish, indistinct idea of the superiority and fixed power of their masters," conjoined with the force of habit, keep the slave-population "in awe and subjection." Can we believe that the slave-holder is himself so ignorant as not to know, that whatever advantage the accidents of climate, or mental culture, may have given the European over the African, still the *brutish, indistinct*, idea of the natural superiority of white men over black, must vanish as a morning cloud before the light of that religion which teaches, that God "hath made of one blood all the nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth?" (Acts xvii. 26.) And knowing this, is he likely to smooth the way for his debased and degraded bondsmen to attain to the possession of that elevating and holy faith, that common charter of our salvation, which recognizes no distinction between "barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free?" While he deems that "the one thing needful," the one all-important object to which every other must be held subordinate, is to keep his wretched thralls in awe and subjection, what else could be expected of him, but that he should endeavour to obstruct,—as he does,—rather than to forward, their progress in the path of religious knowledge; and should revile, and persecute, and if possible, expel from his shores, the zealous and devoted Missionary,* whose labours might impart to them the blessed light of the everlasting gospel, and thus raise them from their present brutified condition, to share in the ennobling privileges of the children of the living God?

That no obstruction should be offered to the bap-

* See Note N.

tising of them by hundreds and by thousands,† so long as they are left in profound ignorance of all which the divine author of that holy rite came into the world to teach them,—this is conceivable enough. But, that they should be freely permitted to learn what are the exalted privileges which Christian baptism, rightly administered and received, confers on those who are admitted to it;—that they should be introduced to a full acquaintance with those sacred Oracles which would teach them what are the natural, inherent, indefeasible rights of man,—rights which no human being can voluntarily surrender into the hands of another, without being a traitor to himself and to his God;—what also his high destinies in eternity, if he be but faithful to the terms of the Christian covenant; and what the guilt of those who degrade him to a level with the beasts, and make his “life bitter with hard bondage;”—that the knowledge of *these* things should be allowed to be freely imparted to the injured race, whose disposition to submit patiently to their multiplied wrongs and oppressions is held to be in direct proportion to the depth of their ignorance, would be a most extraordinary circumstance indeed.

We see, then, it is no more than might have been naturally expected, that the bulk of the slave population in the British Colonies should be as effectually cut off from all Christian instruction, from all religious knowledge, from all acquaintance with that “only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,” as if they were living in the still unexplored recesses of the land from whence they were,

† See Note O.

by British hands, nefariously and basely stolen.† And, if it be some relief to the mind to know, that the feeling on the part of the master which would thus induce him to chain down his unhappy slave in the eternal darkness of heathenism, is not universally prevalent in these regions of cruelty and wickedness, but that there are individual proprietors to be met with, who, highly to their honour, not only tolerate, but encourage missionary exertions amongst their Negroes, yet, when we think how opposite is the general practice, and what, as the consequence of it, is the dreadful state of the mass of the slave-population, how can we lay claim to one single spark of human sympathy, or Christian faith, if our hearts be not moved within us, at the view of their most calamitous, and awful circumstances? True it is, the Judge of all the earth will deal with them hereafter according to unerring principles of righteousness and equity; true, that he will never condemn them for involuntary blindness: nor for the transgression of a law with which they were not, and could not be, acquainted. But, since it is no less certainly declared on the authority of God's unchangeable word, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" that, "as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law;"‡ and that nothing which defileth, or worketh abomination, shall enter within the gates of that holy city, which is lightened by the glory of the Lord, where can we look for any reasonable ground of hope, that the miserable beings, whom a merciless oppression, seconded by an emulous rivalry in impurity and pro-

† See Note P.

‡ Romans ii. 12.

fligacy, consigns over, body and soul, to the uncontrolled dominion of every sinful lust and passion, will be compensated by the happiness of their future condition for the accumulated wrongs and sufferings which have been their portion here on earth? Strive as we may to hope even against hope, (Rom. iv. 18,) yet, alas! we know but too surely, that the hope which rests not on the basis of God's word is likely to vanish at last as an unsubstantial day-dream—to visit our fond imagination no more again for ever.

And now, my Christian Brethren, when we think on these things, are sorrow and commiseration the only emotions that should be excited in our breast? Is there no cause for self-reproach?—none for shame, humiliation, and repentance? Have we not, as a people, been verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we might have seen the anguish of his soul,* and have helped him; and did not? If it was the general expression of the abhorrence conceived by this nation against the barbarous iniquity of the slave-trade, that put an end, so many years ago, to that desolating scourge of humanity,—so far at least as this country was concerned in it,—why should not the same means have been long since employed to deliver us from the guilt of still holding in captivity the victims of that flagitious traffic; and of cruelly condemning their offspring, from the very moment of their birth, to the wretched condition of their parents? The truth is, that from the time of the abolition of the horrid traffic in human flesh and blood, on the part of Great Britain and her foreign Dependencies, most

* Gen. xiii. 21.

of the people of this country seem to have gone to sleep on the subject; to have contentedly wrapt themselves up, for eighteen years, in a sort of dreaming ignorance, or forgetfulness, of the deep and lasting misery left by that commerce, as a parting legacy, to eight hundred thousand of our unfortunate fellow-subjects, and to have entirely overlooked the fact that *their* right to a full participation in all the benefits of our free and happy constitution, is, on every principle of impartial justice, as good as our own. If the moral responsibility of a nation be involved in the moral character of the acts of its Government, we must *all of us*, in our collective capacity, share in the guilt of so long tolerating and upholding a heinous system of oppression, which, but for the wonderful forbearance and long-suffering of our God, would ere now have drawn down upon us the heaviest visitations of his avenging justice. As far as the plea of individual ignorance may be admissible, they certainly, and only they, can be entitled to the benefit of it, who can honestly declare, as in the sight of Him who readeth their hearts, —Never did we know, nor even imagine it possible, that any of the subjects of the British empire, in any part of the world, were thus “bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction;” (Job xxxvi. 8;) and had we known it, the first thought of our hearts would have been, Is there any thing on earth that *we* can do towards effecting their deliverance? If there be, we will not lose an instant in setting our shoulders to the work.

That this declaration may be made with perfect sincerity and truth by numbers of persons who were yet in the early days of life when the slave-trade was abo-

lished, is a reflection in which, no doubt, there is much of consolation. Their attention having never since been particularly directed to the evils of Colonial slavery—except perhaps, very recently,—we trust that their ignorance on the subject may be considered to have been involuntary, and, therefore, that we may be permitted to say, in reference to their peculiar case, as was said by the Apostle Paul, (Acts xvii. 30,) in reference to the errors of the unenlightened heathen, “the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now,” now that the vail which covered the habitations of cruelty has been drawn aside,—now that the system of oppression, which this guilty nation has so long sanctioned and upheld, has been disclosed, though in distant prospect only, to their view,—“*now* God commandeth *all* men,” both those who have sinned through ignorance, and those who “have no cloak for their sin,” “to repent; now he chargeth them all, as they hope for mercy themselves, to show mercy to their afflicted brethren—to listen to the cry of the distressed—to “remember them that are in bonds as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being themselves also in the body.” (Heb. xiii. 3.)

If then, my Brethren, we begin to feel, at last, on this important subject in any degree as we ought, we shall be prepared to inquire, not in a negligent and cursory way, but with deep and serious interest,—What is the particular line of conduct which, under present circumstances, it becomes our duty to pursue?

The first step which naturally presents itself to our mind, as the best *we* can take towards the rendering any aid to our much-injured brethren, the British

Negroes, is to join in earnestly *petitioning* the Imperial Parliament to restore them to the possession of their natural rights, and to the equal protection of the laws of the empire, at the earliest moment in which it can be done consistently with a due regard to their safety and welfare. That some very powerful obstruction* or other must hitherto have opposed itself to the consummation of the great work of justice and humanity on which his Majesty's Government have been seen to enter within the last three years, is proved to demonstration by the simple fact, that the progress which has been made in all that time, has been next to none. If therefore, there were barely a possible chance that the petitions of the people would assist, as I fully believe they will, in the removal of this obstruction, whatever be the nature of it, that alone were reason enough why such petitions should be presented from every place in the kingdom.

Next to the performance of this duty, we must feel that we are called upon to do all in our power towards the *diffusing of information* throughout that large body of our fellow-countrymen who are yet entirely in the dark as to the real nature of West India slavery, and the actual condition of the Negroes. When this darkness shall be dispelled, it were a libel on the character of the country to doubt, that its voice will be heard from one end of the kingdom to the other, demanding a suppression of an order of things so inju-

* If the reader desire to be informed on the real nature of these obstructions, he will find it clearly stated at pp. 63, 64, of "England Enslaved by her own Slave Colonies." By James Stephen, Esq.

rious to the nation's honour, so repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, and so utterly at variance with the fundamental principles of the British constitution. With a view, then to the disseminating, as extensively as possible, amongst all classes of the community, the information they are so much in need of, we should lend our support to one or other of the Associations which have recently been established for *that* purpose more especially, though aiming to forward the cause of Negro emancipation by any other means which may be judged further conducive to the attainment of their object. Neither should we be unmindful to use every proper opportunity for directing the attention of our friends and acquaintance to the same momentous subject, referring them to such authentic and accessible sources of information as we may know to be of the most decisive and convincing character.

We must also remember, that justice, as well as charity, loudly demands, that we contribute, as far as we are able, to the immediate alleviation of the sufferings which many of the unhappy beings, whom we have helped to keep in slavery, are enduring, in addition to their usually allotted portion, from being *turned adrift by their owners to provide for themselves*, when old age, or incurable diseases, and infirmities, have rendered them no longer serviceable. This act of justice and of charity, you may perform, my Brethren,—if God incline your hearts to do so,—through the agency of certain benevolent individuals, who have been employed for some years past, in a few of the islands, in dispensing to the afflicted creatures thus cruelly abandoned to their fate, the relief, and consolation, which from no other quarter could they ever

have received, or hoped for.† Were I to describe to you one of these cases of heart-rending misery and distress, in the plain, unembellished language in which I have seen it narrated in a verified copy of the original communications, you would conceive a far greater horror than you possibly can have done from any thing you have heard this day, of the dreadful influence of the slave-system in depraving, and hardening the human heart to a degree which is scarcely within the bounds of credibility, or conception. But though I am well aware how much more forcibly the mind may be impressed by the statement of *a single fact*, than by dwelling, at whatever length, on general details, and though there is nothing I more earnestly desire than that the impression made on your minds at this time may be not less deep and lasting, than just and reasonable, yet I have not allowed myself to harrow up your feelings by the recital of particular instances of cruelty selected out of the long, though still defective catalogue with which the dark records of Colonial Slavery supply us. Many of them, indeed, are of a description so terrible, and so revolting, that not only would it be a profanation of this house of God to let the sound of them be heard within its walls, —not only would it be a violation of all propriety to speak of them in *any* place before a mixed assembly, but I seriously profess to you, that if, waving these considerations, I were to enter on the narration of *some* of the deeds of darkness I refer to, I think it more than probable that sense, and hearing, would forsake many of those to whom I am now speaking, before the half were told them.

† See Note Q.

And yet, who is there of us all that has not, either unwittingly, or advisedly, given his support to the system which is the prolific parent of these atrocious crimes? For, is it not an indisputable truth, that they who partake of the productions which the labour of the slave supplies, do *all help together to rivet his fetters*,—by encouraging, and enabling, his master to retain him in captivity? If in this free country there were no consumers of the produce of slave-labour, the importation of such produce must soon cease to pollute our shores. If, then, by partaking of the fruits of oppression, we directly contribute to its continued existence, can we possibly exculpate ourselves from the charge of being “partakers of other men’s sins?” There is but one imaginable way in which, as it appears to me, any consistent Christian can justify to himself the use of any article of consumption which comes to him at such a frightful cost of human suffering, and of almost super-human wickedness. If he have taken up the idea, that the decreased consumption of the produce of the toil and suffering of the slaves would but still further enhance their misery, by the reflex operation of the embarrassment it might occasion to their owners, so long as this opinion has possession of his mind, his conscience may be at peace: but, it is a peace which is founded on error. With very few exceptions, the slaves in the British settlements are supplied with food, not by their owners, nor by any payment received from them, but, by the cultivation of certain allotments of ground which they are allowed some scanty pittance of time to work in; though they are not allowed to raise on them

such crops as would return them the best profit.† Now, it can never be supposed that the master would deprive them of their allotment of land, merely because land had become of *less* value to himself, through the reduced demand for its produce. Neither can we imagine, that he would rob them of their time, merely because *he* had *less* occasion for it than formerly, and would derive less profit from its employment in his service. The slave, therefore, having his land and his time, as before, to provide for his own support, would evidently benefit, and not suffer, by a decreased demand for the produce of his uncompensated toil. It has, in fact, been almost invariably found, that the depression of prices has improved the condition of the slave-population; whereas, whenever prices have been high, their sufferings have increased, and the waste of slave-life,—as the destruction of the human animal by overworking him is softly termed in Colonial language—the waste of slave-life has advanced in an equal ratio.§

But even if some temporary inconvenience, some present augmentation of evil, were to be brought upon any of the slaves from the decreased demand for the produce of their labour,—and it is freely admitted, that such a result may, in some few instances, not be impossible,—still, for the sake of attaining the incalculable blessings which must finally, and speedily result to them from the general disuse of all productions but those which are raised by the hands of free men, the temporary evil should be no more regarded than the slight pain of any momentary operation,

† See Note R.

§ See Note S.

which would restore a diseased limb to health and soundness. That the slave-holder must ultimately enfranchise his bondsman, if no sufficient vent can be found for slave-grown produce, is as perfectly certain, as it is, that the master would, in every way, be benefited by the change in an almost equal degree with the slave himself.†

On the review, then, of the whole matter, what, I would ask, shall we be prepared to allege in our defence before the Judge of all the earth, if we do not endeavour, by every means in our power, to break the iron yoke of their bondage from off the neck of our brethren, and let the oppressed go free? Shall we say as Cain did, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Shall we pass by, like the Priest and the Levite, on the other side; that we may not look on the wounds which we are determined not to attempt to heal? Shall we plead the *distance* of the scene of his sufferings, and his wrongs, as a reason for not attending to the voice of his complaint? Hear, then, the success which may be expected to attend a line of defence like this, before the tribunal of the God of righteousness and truth. “If thou forbear”—it is written—“to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain;”—and there is a slaying of the *soul*, be it remembered, as well as of its earthly tenement—“if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not:—doth not he that pondereth the heart, consider it? and shall not he render unto every man according to his works?”* Surely, my Brethren, this

† See Note T.

* Proverbs xxiv. 11—12

should make us careful how we dismiss this subject lightly from our thoughts, or content ourselves with contributing nothing but our *pity* towards the deliverance of more than eight hundred thousand of our fellow creatures out of the merciless hand of their oppressors.

An excessive timidity, perhaps, may whisper, that to remain still inactive were the safer, and the wiser course; lest the measures we adopt should have the effect of goading to redoubled opposition those whom it should, by all means, be our object, not to irritate, but to conciliate. That such an effect should follow from the efforts of the Abolitionists, would indeed, be a circumstance greatly to be regretted. We lament that the mistaken views of the slave-owners, should occasion them painful sensations of any kind. We are sincerely desirous, that *their* interest, as well as the interest of their slaves should be secured and advanced, as no doubt it will be, by the final extinction of West India Slavery. But, with respect to the retarding of the great work of Negro Emancipation by the cause now alluded to, there may be good reason for thinking, that the friends of humanity have at least as much to hope, as to fear, from those blind sallies of excited feeling which prompt to indiscretions directly subversive of the object which the irritated parties are aiming to accomplish. But, however this may be, if Oppression cannot be made to relax its hold, without being inflamed with anger against those who would rescue its helpless victim from its grasp,* I trust they are prepared to say,—We have counted the cost, and are content to abide the issue.

† See Note U.

As a further plea for contentedly leaving our enslaved fellow-subjects in bondage for a yet indefinite period, it is sometimes said, that the happy consummation the Abolitionists are so impatient to accelerate, would more surely be attained by the gradual progress of civilization ;—that something may perhaps be done by carefully educating the children of the Negroes, and by using the proper means to impart to the whole of the slave-population a due portion of religious and moral instruction ; but, it is insisted—and this is all that the most determined opponent of abolition need desire to have conceded to him—it is insisted, that at all events, “ the emancipation of the mind ought invariably to precede that of the body.”† What unfeeling mockery is this ! As if it were possible for the mind of a free man to grow up in the bosom of a slave,—brand-marked, perhaps, and scarred by the wounds of ignominious fetters,—without killing him with lingering torture, in thinking of the depth to which he has been degraded beneath the level of his fellow men !

Then, as to any general improvement to be effected in the moral character and habits of the Slaves by the help of Schools and Churches,—when it shall be possible to restore a sick man to health by the use of any outward applications, while we go on feeding him with the poison which is the cause of his malady, and is circulating with the current of life through every vein and artery, carrying disease and anguish to the remotest fibre of his frame, then, and not before, may we expect to see the slave-population of our Colonies generally benefited by moral and religious instruction,

† Quarterly Review, No. 64, p. 352.

while the baneful influence of the slave-system there established is permitted to counteract its efficacy.* That system is an evil for which no remedy can be found, short of its utter extirpation. No moral health can ever, by any possibility, exist amongst the *aggregate* either of masters or slaves, while so fatal a pest as this pervades and vitiates the whole frame of society. "The whole head is sick; and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the crown of the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." (Isaiah i. 5, 6.)

It is for want of attention to this incontrovertible truth, that many persons very friendly to the cause of ultimate abolition, allow their minds to be led away from the steady straight-forward pursuit of that great object, into by-paths of shifting expedients, of mere temporizing plans and projects, certainly tardy in operation, but most uncertain and doubtful in efficacy. With whomsoever such projects may originate, and whatever be their real design, they are most of them calculated to answer little other end than *to put aside for an indefinite length of time* the all-important measure of emancipation, and to lull its friends and advocates into a soft slumber of security, from which it may not be found such an easy task hereafter to awaken them. An opiate of this kind is the plausible plan I have been remarking upon for the moral and religious instruction of the slaves. That every thing *ought* to be done which *can* be done towards christianizing that unhappy race of beings, even while yet retained in bondage, is a point on which we are, no doubt, all of us entirely agreed. But, to say, that

* See Note V.

we should be content to see them doomed to remain in their present state of slavery till Christian education and instruction shall have transformed them into good moral and religious characters, is to betray great ignorance indeed, either of human nature, or of Colonial Slavery, as it exists both in law and in practice. For, in the first place, with whatever sincerity the intellectual and moral improvement of the slave-population may be desired by the West India Proprietors *resident in this country*, many of whom are known to be men of humane and benevolent feelings, and all of whom, or nearly all, are said to have concurred in those moderate recommendations of Government to the local Legislatures, which have stirred up so violent a flame of opposition in the Western Hemisphere, yet, since it is an indisputable fact, that the Planters and Managers, resident in the Colonies have, with few exceptions, always looked with an evil eye, on any attempt to elevate the Negro character from its unnatural debasement, by engrafting on it the knowledge and principles of Christianity, how much more likely will they be to resist, and to thwart by every means in their power, any attempt of the kind which it is now proposed to make for the avowed and express purpose of the more speedily rescuing out of their hands the captives whom they have declared their determination to retain their hold of, at whatever hazard, to the latest moment possible?

But, these considerations apart, with what reasonable hope of success, under the present order of things, is a Christian Teacher to inculcate on the minds of the slaves the practice of the several religious and social duties enjoined in the Holy Scriptures? If he

begin by teaching them, that their first duty is to *worship their Creator in public* and in private, and to honour his word by yielding obedience to his commands, may not most of them reply,—But how is it possible for us to join in public worship, so long as the sabbath, instead of being to us a day of religious rest from labour, is a day of ceaseless toil or traffic; and so long as the labour exacted from us by our taskmasters, by night as well as by day during five or six months in the year,* is such as not to leave us time enough even to refresh our wearied limbs with needful rest and sleep? And as to yielding obedience in other things to God's commands, which of them all dare we refuse to transgress, if we are ordered to do so by those whose orders it were as much as our lives are worth to dispute for one moment?

If, next, it be attempted to teach them, that it is the duty of every Christian, “to be true and just in all his dealings,—to keep his hands from picking and stealing, and his tongue from lying,” &c. is it to be supposed they will easily be convinced, that it is a crime in *them* to commit petty depredations on those by whom they themselves have been robbed of their dearest rights and privileges;—on those who purchased them of men-stealers, knowing them to be stolen; and, who, when they had so purchased them, stripped them, as far as it was possible, of every attribute of man which can distinguish him from the beasts of the stall? And then, with respect to the sacred obligations of truth, can it be expected that a *slave* should show an inviolable respect for them, at times when his

* Viz. in Crop-time.

only hope of escaping the dreaded tortures of the lash is, that he may be able to deceive his oppressor by a lie ?

If again they are addressed on the subject of *moral purity* and virtue, on the sanctity of the marriage vow, on the duties which the unmarried, of both sexes, owe unto themselves,—that they preserve a character untarnished by the guilt of illicit intercourse either amongst their own class, or with their superiors,—that nothing loose or wanton should ever be allowed to appear either in their words or actions, but that they should constantly demean themselves as persons who had renounced all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and had been called with a holy calling to follow a holy Lord ; how can it ever be imagined that such admonitions as these would be listened to and obeyed, while the marriages of the slaves are protected by no legal sanction, while the wife may be torn from her husband,† and the daughter from her parents ; and while there is nothing to prevent the dissolute and licentious Overseer from enforcing compliance with his desires by the influence of terror, or the actual infliction of torment ?- But, supposing for a moment that this brutal and too common mode of seduction were refrained from, still, if the strongest safe-guard of female virtue, next to religious principle, be *a feeling of self-respect*, united to the dread of public scorn, how is it possible for this safe-guard to be found amongst unhappy females who are subjected, for every trifling fault, or without any fault at all, to receive the most degrading and indecent punishment in the open face

† See Note W.

of day, and in the sight of the other sex? To think of inspiring the mind of a female, doomed to this miserable and abject state, with the sentiments and feelings which might be expected to inhabit her bosom, if protected from outrage and insult, by the laws and usages of civilized society, what were this,—even supposing it a practicable achievement—but to add ten-fold bitterness to the dregs of her cup of misery, which, without any stretch of imagination, we may conceive to be bitter enough already?

But if, in the last place, the Christian Teacher or Catechist should proceed, according to the excellent formulary of instruction provided by our Church, to impress on the minds of his charge their incumbent obligation “to learn and labour, truly to get their own living, and to do their duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call them,” in what a labyrinth of inextricable confusion would he immediately find himself involved! The duty of a subject to his sovereign, or of hireling to his employer, is intelligible and definable. But, who shall undertake to define the duty of a Negro slave to his master? On what principles would you endeavour to convince him, that the man who bought him of the man who stole him, has a good and valid title to his dutiful obedience? Though it be but a few years ago that the traffic in human flesh and blood was made piracy by the law of these realms, yet there *never* was a time when it was not piracy by the laws of nature and of God. And, therefore, if the British slave-holder have a right to the obedience of his slave, it is a right founded on the commission of an acknowledged wrong; a wrong which ought *always* to have exposed its per-

petrators, as it would now expose them, to the penalty of an ignominious death. But, in what way it is to be shown, that such a right as this should bind the conscience to obedience, and make the performance of the exacted task a moral and religious duty, is a problem which I must leave to be solved by those who are able to persuade themselves, that Colonial slavery is not repugnant to the principles, and precepts, of the religion of Jesus Christ. Supposing, however, that the first difficulty, which thus presents itself on the very threshold of the attempt to teach a *slave* his duty to his master, could in some way or other be surmounted, a second, of no less formidable aspect, immediately rises up behind it. For, he is next to be told, that the services he is to perform, for those who claim him as their property, are to be performed without any feeling of dissatisfaction or reluctance, as necessarily appertaining to that "state of life *unto which it hath pleased God to call him;*" and in which, therefore, he ought to be perfectly contented to remain! Here, again, into what a wide and trackless sea of doubt, perplexity, and confusion, does the Christian instructor of slaves find himself embarked, without chart or compass to direct his course, or a single star in heaven to steer by! Can he conscientiously believe, and teach, that it is the duty of any man living to rest contented in a state which *deprives him of his free agency*: and in which, moreover, he is almost irresistibly impelled, in certain instances, to yield obedience to the commands of a fellow-creature in opposition to the commands of his Creator? Can any one passage of Scripture be produced, from Genesis to Revelation, which, without "handling the word of God deceit-

fully," can be construed into the inculcating, or the sanctioning of such an opinion,—I had almost said—such an *impious* opinion, as this? And then, as to its being the pleasure of the common Father of mankind, that hundreds of thousands of his creatures should be fixed in this dreadful state of moral and mental degradation,—to say nothing, at this time, of the physical evils inseparably attending on it, this surely were an idea too monstrous to find admission, for an instant, into the mind of any one who knows how impossible it is for the God of righteousness and mercy, to be pleased with injustice, inhumanity, and crime. That the Supreme Ruler does, for reasons to us unfathomable, *permit* this state of things to exist, —as he permits the existence of all other moral and natural evil in the world,—is indeed, an evident and palpable truth. But, the religious instructor of our enslaved fellow-subjects in the British Colonies must be careful how he explains to *them*, in reference to their own case, the difference between the *permission* and the *appointment* of an over-ruling Providence. He is, indeed, placed in a situation beset with difficulties on every side; a situation which is, altogether as pitifully embarrassing as it is possible for the mind to conceive. While truth impels him one way, expediency drags him another. And if, at last, he can reconcile it to his conscience not to impart to his sable hearers the whole counsel of God, not to introduce *them*, on equal terms with the rest of mankind, to the knowledge of that divine revelation which was designed by its blessed Author to be free as the light of heaven unto all who should be willing to possess it; if he can do this, and can also bring himself to be-

lieve, that it is incumbent on him to satisfy the minds of the enslaved Negroes, that they ought to rest contented in the wretched and abject condition they are held in, as being that which it is God's pleasure to allot to them, the arduous task to which he must address himself, in gaining their assent to this doctrine, will have this peculiarly adverse circumstance attending it,—that the clearer the perception, the stronger the intellect, the more improved the faculties, of those whom he is labouring to convince of the justice of his position, the more difficult will he always find it to make them understand, or receive, his sayings.

Such, then, is the success that may reasonably be expected to follow from the attempt to improve, and elevate, the character of the slaves in the British Colonies by the help of moral and religious instruction, while the present demoralizing and unchristian system of slavery is there permitted to exert its opposing influence. And if, from this cheerless prospect, we turn our eyes to another quarter, and look for happier results from the measures of melioration which we would fain believe may be provided by *legislative enactment*, here also we are met by the unwelcome truth, that any attempts which have yet been made in this way to correct the inherent vices of the system have proved, generally, impotent and abortive. Of the laws which have been enacted by the local legislatures for this ostensible purpose the real object appears, in most instances, to have been the same with that which the Governor of Dominica ascribes to an Act passed in that island, before the abolition of the slave-trade, “for the encouragement, protection, and better go-

vernment of slaves." This Act," he says,* " appears " to have been considered, from the day it was passed until this hour, † as a political measure *to avert the interference of the mother country in the management of the slaves.*" We are informed on the same authority, that the clauses of this Act, which had given a promise of better days, "*had been wholly neglected.*" This need occasion us no surprise at all; for, " there is something," says a distinguished individual, whose opinion on such a subject is entitled to be listened to with no common attention—" there is something in the nature of absolute authority, in the relation between master and slave, which makes despotism in *all cases*, and under *all circumstances*, an incompetent and unsure executor even of its own provisions in favour of the objects of its power." †

But, if this essential feature in the character of despotism renders it hopeless that the West India slaves will ever be materially benefited by any Acts of the Colonial legislatures, there is also a most serious, if not an insuperable, obstacle in the way of any effectual melioration of their condition by any legislative enactments passed for that end by the Parliament of this country, and that is, the want of suitable agents, who both can, and will, see such enactments carried into full effect, while the parties who are to appeal to them for protection remain in the condition of slaves. § And thus, on whichever side we view the system of West India Slavery, the same truth is still forced on our conviction, viz. that its evils are far too great,

* See Note X

‡ An interval of Six years

† See Note Y.

§ See Note Z.

and too deeply seated, to be dealt with only in the way of remedial treatment and regulation ; and that its total extinction, at the very earliest moment in which it may be accomplished with due regard to the well-being of the slaves, and to the safety of the free inhabitants of the colonies, is the point to which the united efforts of the people of this country should be steadily and perseveringly directed.

By the gratitude, then, which we owe to God for our own undeserved enjoyment of the unnumbered blessings of freedom ;—by the sincerity of the prayers and intercessions we are continually offering up for the “ desolate and oppressed ;”—by our regard for the future, and eternal, happiness of the miserable captives for whose salvation, despised as they are of men, the Son of God poured forth his precious blood upon the cross ; by the Christian concern we feel for the awfully perilous state of the souls of the Oppressors themselves, living, as they do, where sin and vice riot in the wantonness of uncontrolled dominion ;—by all these affecting considerations, and by many, many more, which the want of time will not permit me now to advert to, we are all of us solemnly called upon to do what we can to break the yoke of their bondage from off the necks of that unhappy people,— ‘ scattered and peeled, meted out, and trodden down,’—from the cry of whose distress we have too long turned away our ear.

This call of duty, I would fain hope that none of us shall refuse to hear and to obey. But, should it unhappily be otherwise, it may still be permitted me to reflect, with some small degree of comfort, that at least my feeble endeavours have not been wanting to

impart to those who have now heard me, such a measure of acquaintance with the truth as may enable them to judge for themselves what is the course which, *on Christian principles*, they are required to follow and adhere to.

I pray God their conduct may be such as to leave them nothing to fear, either now or hereafter,—in reference to this particular point of duty,—from that weighty declaration of the Apostle,—“to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (James iv. 17.) “Consider,” my Christian Brethren, what I say ; and the Lord give you understanding in all things.” (2 Tim. ii. 7.) Amen.

APPENDIX.

Note A. page 8.

The Court of policy in Demerara declare, that in that Colony "the interest of an owner in his slave is that of *fee-simple absolute*;"—that "slaves are" there "*chattels* as much as any other moveable property:"—that "to give to the slave the right of purchasing himself, against the will and consent of his owner, will annihilate the right of the owner, and confer on the slave a power which no other person possesses." See page 43 of "The slave colonies of Great Britain; or, a Picture of Negro Slavery, drawn by the Colonists themselves;" being an Abstract of the various Papers recently laid before Parliament on that subject.

To the same effect, the Preamble of an Act of the Legislature of Bermuda, imposing a penalty of Ten Pounds (currency) on the wilful murder of a slave by his owner, recites that, "Whereas Negroes are no otherwise valued or esteemed amongst us than as our *goods and chattels*, or other personal estate: therefore," &c. &c. "Second Report of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery." Page 144.

Note B. page 8.

If proof be required, that the slaves work without wages, see pp. 23, 24, of "Notes on the present condition of the Negroes in Jamaica:" by H. T. De La Beche, Esq. F. R. S.—

This gentleman is the proprietor of a sugar estate in Jamaica, where he resided from March 1823, to December 1824. From the same authority we learn, that "the most common mode of calling the Jamaica Negroes to their labour, is *by the cracking of the driver's whip.*" Page 18. Mr. De La Beche says, he has abolished the use of it, as a stimulus to labour, on his own estate. With respect to night-work, he says, page 7, "During crop-time, which generally lasts about four months," (often, five,) "the Negroes are, in consequence of being comparatively few on this estate, divided into two spells, which relieve each other every twelve hours, viz. at noon and midnight, thus allowing half the night for work, and half for rest during five days in the week;—and, query, is not this "*besides* being fully occupied in the various occupations of the plantation during the day?"—viz. the one spell, from six in the morning till noon; and the other, from noon till six in the evening? See "Facts Illustrative of the Condition of the Negro Slaves in Jamaica," p 3. Mr. De La Beche says *additional* labour is required of the Negroes in crop-time, viz. that of the night," pp. 7, 8; and therefore, more than twelve hours out of twenty-four; though it *seems* to be intimated in the above statement, that the two spells of the Halse Hall Negroes worked but twelve hours each. *Women* still work under the whip as well as men. Colonists' own "Picture," &c. pp. 19, 23. 97. 98.

Note C. page 8.

As long ago as the year 1793, Mr. Bryan Edwards said, "The great, and I fear *incurable defect in the system* of slavery, is the circumstance already mentioned, that the evidence of the slave cannot be admitted against a white person, even in cases of the most atrocious injury. This is an evil to which on several accounts, I fear *no direct and efficacious* remedy can be applied." Page 140 of vol. ii. of "The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies."

The late Sir William Young,—like Mr. Edwards, a planter, and an opponent of the abolition of the slave trade,—said, in the year 1811, "When the intervention of the law is most

required, it will have the least effect ; as in cases where a vindictive and cruel master has dared to commit the most atrocious cruelties, *even to murder his slave*, no free person being present to witness the act." Page 58 of the first " Report of the Society for the Mitigation, &c. of Slavery."

In the answer received from St. Kitt's to the late recommendations of Government, a letter is inserted from Chief Justice Pickwood to the Governor, Maxwell, in which he says, " the reception of such testimony" (*viz* slave testimony,) can alone do away with the reproach which now attaches to us, that not only cruelty but *murder may be committed openly*, and in the presence of hundreds, without the possibility of obtaining evidence for the conviction of the offender." Page 95 of " The Picture of Negro Slavery, drawn by the Colonists themselves."

In November, 1824, a Bill brought into the House of Assembly in Jamaica, for the partial amendment of the law of slave evidence, was rejected by a majority of thirty-four to one. " Second Report of the Society for the Mitigation, &c. of Slavery." pp. 12. 85.

Note D page 9.

Chief Justice Pickwood, in the letter above referred to, observes, " Although our statute book is disgraced with, perhaps fewer sanctions to atrocious and sanguinary conduct towards the slave population than are to be found among our neighbours, there is still much which proclaims the age when these our fellow-creatures were considered *of less importance than the soil which they cultivated, or the cattle which they drove*." " Picture of Negro Slavery," &c. page 93. 94.

For a specimen of legal protection and redress afforded to slaves suffering under admitted injuries, see the case of the Driver, *Ness*, in Extracts from a Parliamentary Paper, entitled—" Copies of the Record of the Fiscals of Demarara and Berbice, in their capacity of Guardians and Protectors of Slaves," &c. &c. from February, 1819, to November, 1823. The case is given in " Picture of Negro Slavery," &c. page 161. See also the cases of nine Negro Women belonging to

Plantation Port Moraunt, *ib.* page 160 : and of sixteen Negroes of Plantation Herstelling, *ib.* page 160 : and of the Negroes of Plantation Fowlis, *ib.* page 159 : and of the Negro belonging to Plantation Providence, *ib.* page 147 : and of Felix belonging to Plantation Scotland, *ib.* page 145, 146.

See also the latter part of Note A. The law there referred to was still in existence in the beginning of this present year, 1825 ; and there is no reason to believe it has been since repealed. Colonists' Own "Picture," page 27.

Note E. page 9.

Bishop Porteus, in a note to his xviiith. sermon, page 399, speaks of a law then in existence in Barbadoes, punishing "the wilful murder of a Negro from *wantonness* (as the law expresses it) and *bloodymindedness*, only by a small pecuniary fine." This law has just been repealed : but, by the recently amended slave code of the Colony, if "any slave shall be killed while committing, or attempting to commit, *any* robbery, or theft, or in the *attempt* to *injure* any white person, the person killing any such slave, *shall not be punished* for the same, either criminally or otherwise." Colonists' own "Picture," page 21.

Note F. page 10.

The average amount of taxes and fees paid on the manumission of twenty-five slaves in Berbice, (being the total number manumitted from January 1, 1822, to April 13, 1824, according to a return made by the House of Commons,) was forty pounds sterling for each. In Demerara and Essequibo the average rate is thirty-six pounds sterling for each. Colonists' own "Picture," pp. 27 and 29.

In the recommendations of Government to the Local Legislatures, it is said, "*every unnecessary obstacle*" to the manumission of slaves must be removed. "Second Report of the Society for the Mitigation," &c. page 94.

One such unnecessary obstacle is the non-consent of the master, when the slave is able to pay for his manumission at a fair appraisement. This obstacle is not yet removed : and

Mr. De La Beche thinks—with the Demerara Court of Policy—that it ought not to be removed; *because* the “best and most industrious people are alone likely to avail themselves of this right; and he,” the planter, “would be saddled with the worthless and unprofitable, with whom he would be unable to cultivate the property!” “Notes on the present condition of the Negroes in Jamaica,” page 50.

Note G. page 10.

See Royal Jamaica Gazette, September 18, 1824; and Colonists' own “Picture,” page 17.

Note H. page 11.

Even if it were enlarged to the full extent to which we are told it is intended to be carried, it would not then embrace one third part of the slave population in the whole of the British Colonies. Colonists' own “Picture,” page 3. The estimated population of slaves in the island of Trinidad, to which alone the Order in Council of 1824 applies, was in that year twenty-two thousand five hundred.

Note I. page 12.

See Parochial Resolutions of Jamaica, as they appear in the Royal Jamaica Gazettes for October, 1824. Those of the Freeholders of St. Elizabeth are particularly deserving attention, and may be seen in the Appendix to the Second Report of the Society for the Mitigation, &c. pp. 83, 84. In the additional Postscript to the Royal Gazette of October 11—18, 1823, the Editor says, in reference to the mild and temperate *recommendations* of his Majesty's Government for the reformation of the Slave Code,—“We will do his Lordship” (Earl Bathurst) “the justice of believing that the threat couched in his despatch is not a mere *brutum fulmen*; but that it will certainly be acted on in case of contumacious resistance to his high behest. We will go still further, and we will suppose the Common's House, the Lord's House, and the King himself,

to join in a law for the better internal government of the Colonies. The next thing to be done is, to transmit the law to the islands ; and in the small ones, *might may overcome right* ; but in Jamaica we venture to prophecy, that the said law will be no more regarded than the instruction of Lord Bathurst which preceded it." The unmeasured violence of this language in no degree exceeds that of the indecent personal abuse which the Editor heaps on the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, as being the organ of a Ministry which allows itself to be urged on in its "*headstrong and ominous career*" by "*fanatics and revolutionists*" of the vilest description.

Note K. page 13.

"Notwithstanding what has been related of the firmness and courage of the natives of the Gold Coast, it is certain that the Negroes in general in our islands, (such of them at least as have been any length of time in a state of servitude,) are of a distrustful and cowardly disposition. *So degrading is the nature of slavery*, that fortitude of mind is lost as free agency is restrained. To the same cause probably must be imputed their propensity to conceal, or violate the truth ; which is so general, that I think the vice of falsehood is one of the most prominent features in their character. If a negro is asked even an indifferent question by his master, he seldom gives an immediate reply ; but, affecting not to understand what is said, compels a repetition of the question, that he may have time to consider, not what is the true answer, but, what is the most politic one for him to give. The proneness observable in many of them to the vice of theft, has already been noticed ; and I am afraid that evil communication makes it almost general." Bryan Edwards's "*History, Civil and Commercial,*" &c. vol. ii. page 77. Ib. page 62.—"It has been supposed, that this propensity, among other vices, is natural to a state of slavery, which *degrades and corrupts the human mind in a deplorable manner.*" "The day," says Homer, "which makes a man a slave, takes away half his worth ;" and in fact, *he loses every impulse to action, except that of fear.* Ib. page 58.

This moral murder of the Negro character by the horrible system of Colonial slavery is the more grievously to be lamented, because in his own country, the African Negro is distinguished by the possession of, at least, *as many* good qualities as belong to the people of any of the nations of Europe. That there are, in some instances, broad lines of distinction in the natural character of the different tribes which inhabit the vast regions from whence the victims of the slave-trade are swept away to the West Indian charnel house, is certainly true. But by the impartial testimony of a witness, whose competency no one will be disposed to call in question, it is proved, that the general characteristic qualities of the Negroes in Africa are the following ; viz. honesty, fidelity, gratitude, (Parkes's Travels, page 16.)—parental and filial affection, (Ib page 47. 81. 254.)—industry, (page 61. 280.)—kind-heartedness, (page 262.)—veracity, (page 268.)—conjugal fidelity, (page 268.)—gentleness, with few exceptions, (page 312)—and great ingenuity, exercised in various and extensive branches of manufactory, and handicraft trades. (pp. 281. 282.) Astley's Voyages, and Golbery's Travels, bear testimony to the same effect.

In natural understanding they are not inferior to the polished nations of Europe. "I have often," says Mr. Edwards, "heard them convey much strong meaning in a narrow compass: I have been surprized by such figurative expressions, and (notwithstanding their ignorance of abstract terms) such pointed sentences, as would have reflected no disgrace on poets and philosophers." vol ii. p 83.

"In firmness of mind, in strength of nerve, in contempt of pain and death, in fondness for enterprises of difficulty and danger, the Koromantyn, or Gold Coast Negro is not to be surpassed by the people of any country upon earth." (Ib. vol ii. page 63.) We were taught, in the days of our boyhood, to admire the stern, undaunted, resolution of the noble Roman, who had purposed to be the assassin of Porsena, in laying his hand on the burning coals of the altar to convince the Etrurian King how much he despised his threats of torture. But, however great his fortitude, it can hardly bear comparison with the indomitable spirit evinced by three Koromantyn

Negroes, who were tortured to death in Jamaica for murderous outrages—as Mr. Bryan Edwards tells us—committed by them and a number of their countrymen, in an attempt they engaged in for the recovery of their freedom. The acts of “the insurgents,” according to Mr. Edwards, must have rivalled in ferocity the acts of European troops sacking an enemy’s town; for, he says, they spared not even infants at the breast. And yet he informs us, that these same infuriated beings, having heard from their enslaved comrades the good character for tenderness and humanity of an overseer, named Abraham Fletcher, “spared his life from respect to his virtues, and suffered him *to pass through them unmolested.*” “History civil,” &c. page 64. One of these three men above referred to, “was condemned to be burnt; and the other two to be hung up alive in irons, and left to perish in that dreadful situation. The wretch that was burnt was made to sit on the ground, and his body being chained to an iron stake, the fire was applied to his feet. He uttered not a groan, and *saw his legs reduced to ashes with the utmost firmness and composure:* after which, one of his arms by some means getting loose, he snatched a brand from the fire that was consuming him, and flung it in the face of the executioner. The two that were hung up alive were indulged, at their own request, with a hearty meal immediately before they were suspended on the gibbet, which was erected on the parade of the town of Kingston. From that time, until they expired, *they never uttered the least complaint,* except only of cold in the night; but diverted themselves all day long in discourse with their countrymen, who were permitted, very improperly, to surround the gibbet. On the seventh day a notion prevailed among the spectators that one of them wished to communicate an important secret to his master, my near relation; who being in St. Mary’s, the commanding officer sent for me. I endeavoured, by means of an interpreter, to let him know that I was present: but I could not understand what he said in return. I remember that both he and his fellow-sufferer laughed immoderately at something that occurred,—I know not what. *The next morning one of them silently expired, as did the other on the morning of the ninth day.*” 1b vol. ii. pp. 65—66.

Similar invincible heroism was displayed by several insurgent Negroes, who expired under refined tortures in Demerara, in the year 1796. See No. vi. pp. 45, 46. of a periodical Publication, entitled, "Negro Slavery."

Note L. Page 13.

In Earl Bathurst's Letter, dated May 28, 1823, and addressed to the Governor of Demerara,—and subsequently transmitted to the Governors of all the other Slave Colonies,—it is said, "The immediate abolition of Sunday markets is not insisted upon *until the means of religious instruction shall have been provided.*" Page 92 of Appendix to the Second Report of the Anti-Slavery Society.

"Until the religious establishment shall be completed, *the solemnization of marriages* by persons who are not in holy orders might be permitted; and any minister of religion, not engaged in any secular calling, might be employed, in *cases where the attendance of a Clergyman of the Church of England cannot be procured.*" *Ib.* page 93.

Note M. page 13.

In the year 1817, "Earl Bathurst addressed a circular letter to the Governors of the West India Colonies, requiring certain returns, with a view of ascertaining the progress made by the clergy in the religious instruction of the slave population." The Rev. W. Chaderton, of Antigua, declared it to be "absolutely impossible for the established clergy at present existing in the West Indies, to pay any effectual attention to the slaves."—See p. 78, of No. IX. of the periodical publication entitled "Negro Slavery," and p. 216 of "The Slavery of the British West India Colonies delineated." By James Stephen, Esq.

The returns were nearly to the same effect from the clergy of Barbadoes, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitt's,—with the exception of one of its five clergymen viz. the Rev. W. Davis—Nevis, Tobago, Tortola, Trinidad, and Jamaica. "In Demerara, containing 80,000 inhabitants, there was *only one* cler-

gyman of the Church of England, and *one* of the Dutch Church.'—“*Negro Slavery.*” p. 79—81. In Saint Lucia there is, to this day, neither Protestant minister, nor Protestant place of worship in the whole Colony, nor “even one place of worship at Castries, the chief town for the Catholics, who form its main population.”—Colonists’ own “*Picture,*” p. 96.

The Bev. R. Bickell, late Naval Chaplain at Fort-Royal, in Jamaica, says, “nearly the whole of the field Negroes (nine tenths of the population) have not,” in November, 1824, “even the outward form of religion, and are just as great heathens as if they were on the banks of the Gambia or Niger.”—See “the West Indies as they are,” p. 73.—For a full and connected view of this important Subject, see “*The Slavery of the British West India Colonies delineated.*” p. 205—276.

Note N page 14.

To the fate of Mr. Smith it were too painful to revert: neither is it likely, after the way in which that dark transaction was noticed in Parliament, that any other Missionary will be sacrificed in cold blood, as he was, under the form and mockery of *law*.

The sense of the Government and Parliament has also been strongly marked on the atrocious conduct of the Barbarians towards Mr. Shrewsbury, of Bridgetown, on the 19th and 20th *nights* of October, 1823. This highly respectable individual narrowly escaped a *violent death* from the hands of those who gloried in having levelled his place of worship to the ground, and defied the local authorities to bring them to justice for the outrage.—Colonists’ own “*Picture,*” &c. page 26. And “*Negro Slavery,*” No. V. p. 42—44. Christian Observer, Vol. XXIV. p. 23.

How far the feeling of hostility towards Christian Missionaries, ‘*Saints, and Fanatics,*’ has pervaded the white inhabitants of Jamaica may be learnt from the parochial resolutions of the freeholders of Portland, and of St. Elizabeth, as they appear in the Royal Gazette of Jamaica, October 30, 1824 — See Appendix to the Second Report of the Anti-Slavery Soci-

ety, p. 83—84.—And yet, Mr. De La Beche, who was proof against the wide spreading contagion of this inveterate prejudice against useful Ministers of Religion, ascribes whatever “progress Christianity is now making among the Negroes mainly to the labours of the Wesleyan and Baptist Missionaries.”—“Notes on the present condition,” &c p 28. From his own personal observation of the Wesleyan Missionaries in Jamaica, he believes them to be a highly useful body of men, well calculated to instruct the slaves,” &c. &c. p. 29. But, alas! the more useful, the more dreaded, and hated, by those who cling to the present order of things with the same pertinacity, and on the same principle with which the craftsmen at Ephesus clung to the worship of Diana; well knowing, at the same time, that *an enlightened people cannot long be an enslaved one.* Mr. Bickell tells us plainly (p. 83, 84, of “The West Indies as they are”) that the belief of this truth by the Resident Proprietors and Planters (though he himself does not admit that it is the truth) is the principal reason of their aversion “to all instruction, and more particularly to one of the most important modes of conveying it, viz. to the attendance of *Clergymen* or others on the estates, for the purpose of catechising or lecturing.”

Note O. page 15

“Hundreds of Negroes have no doubt been baptised,” says Mr. De La Beche; “but the ceremony seems to have been considered all-sufficient, *no religious instruction having been afforded either before or after.*”—“Notes on the present condition.” &c. p. 27.

“Nine thousand, four hundred, and thirteen Negro Slaves,” says the Rev. G. Bridges, of Manchester, in Jamaica, “I have actually baptised during my residence in this parish, many of whom attend Church;” (how many? - and, what Church?) “*some have learned the Lord’s Prayer, and ten commandments; and a few are so far advanced as to be now disseminating their little stock of religious knowledge on the estates to which they are attached.*” When Mr. Bridges made this statement, he “had been *recently presented* to the parish of Manchester; his immediate predecessor, Mr. Hill, in his letter of June, 1817, called the slaves in that parish, “the heathen.”—Christian Observer, Vol. XXIV. p. 295.

How far it may be the wish of the resident proprietors and managers, as a body, that the slaves should cease to be heathen, may be fairly conjectured from the following proposition contained in certain resolutions passed at a meeting of the White Proprietors of North Naparema, in Trinidad, in reference to the obnoxious Order in Council, viz. "that any attempt to instil into their (the slaves') minds religious instruction, or education, *beyond what they now possess* (so long as slaves are property) would not, in the opinion of the undersigned tend to render their situation more pleasant, but be, in fact, *incompatible with the existence of slavery.*"—Negro Slavery," No. VIII. p. 67.

Note P. page 16.

"Mr. Bryan Edwards, in his speech delivered at a free-conference between the Council and Assembly of the island of Jamaica, in November, 1789, explicitly and honourably confesses, "I am persuaded that *Mr. Wilberforce has been very rightly informed as to the manner in which slaves are generally procured.* The assertion that a great many of them are criminals and convicts, is a mockery and insult," &c.—Bishop Porteus's Sermons, p. 426.

Note Q. page 22.

See the twelve Reports of "The Association for the Relief of cases of great distress in the island of Antigua, among *the discarded Negroes,*" &c. "An account of the cases, and the manner in which the money has been appropriated, lies at Thomas Cristy's, 35, Grace-Church Street, for the inspection of Subscribers."

Note R. page 24.

The slaves are not allowed to grow *any article of exportable produce* for their own profit.—See Colonists' own "Picture," p. 18. 108.—In addition to the provisions which they raise by their own labour, "a few herrings, or a little salt fish, but in quantities so small, as merely to serve as a seasoning for their food, is given to the slaves."—Second Report of the Anti-slavery Society, p. 20.

Note S. page 24.

See *Ibid.* p. 19—29. See also p. 17 of “Notes on the present condition,” &c. It is there admitted, that “a decrease of Negroes is *very common*” on the Jamaica Estates, “arising from various circumstances;” of which “*ill treatment*” is allowed to be one in some instances. But, what were the proper term whereby to designate the crime of *destroying the life of a fellow-creature by ill treatment*? Let the West Indian Proprietor lay his hand on his heart, and answer that question in the sight of God.

Note T. page 25.

That free labour is cheaper to the employer than slave labour is a position of which the truth has been irrefragably established both by argument and experiment. Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, Book I. Chap. 8. p. 109. Vol. I. of the Edinburgh Edit. 1811.

“A Letter to M. Jean Baptist Say, on the comparative expence of free and Slave-labour. By Adam Hodgson.”

“Thoughts on the necessity of improving the condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies,” &c. By T. Clarkson, Esq.—See p. 36, and thence to the end of the Pamphlet.

The demoralizing effect of West India Slavery on the free inhabitants of the Colonies is proved by the unbiassed testimony of numberless witnesses of the first respectability; amongst others, by the Rev. Thomas Cooper, in his “Facts illustrative of the condition of the Negro slaves in Jamaica;” by the Rev. R. Bickell, in “The West Indies as they are;” by Dr. Williamson, (a strenuous opponent of the abolition of slavery,) in his “Medical and Miscellaneous Observations relative to the West India Islands.” The details are beyond conception horrible. That slavery, wherever it has existed, has always tended to generate a spirit of unrelenting *cruelty* in the bosom of the master, and that no order of minds has been found to be altogether proof against its influence in this respect, either before or after the time when Cato, the Censor, drove from his door, and sold for a few denarii the superannuated, but unoffending slaves, whose days of profitable

vigor had been spent in his service, (Plutarch's M. Cato.) are facts known and acknowledged, by every person of ordinary information in the kingdom. But, the depths of *profligacy* and licentiousness into which the White Inhabitants of the Slave Colonies are sunk, through the influence of the system there prevailing, is known, as yet, to comparatively few of the people of this country; and if it were correctly stated to them, on however good authority, would scarcely gain their credence.

Note U. page 26.

That it is impossible for the friends of abolition to stir a single step without irritating the Planters, is plain from the temper in which the very moderate provisions of the Order in Council have been received in Trinidad, and the *recommendations* of Government in the other Colonies. "Under these circumstances," say the Planters of Trinidad, alluding to the prohibition of the cart-whip as a stimulus to labour in the field, "can any cheerful co-operation be expected from the *harrassed and irritated master* to promote the moral improvement of the Slaves? It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that every such feeling is at this moment extinct in the colony."—Second Report of the Society for the mitigation &c. p. 3. See also Note I.

Note V. page 28.

Supposing, for instance, that religious and moral instruction could do as much for the West Indian Slaves, who should be the subjects of it, as it could for persons of free condition; still, since the resident Planters and Overseers are opposed to their receiving such instruction, how can it ever be effectually administered? Whatever be the intentions of the Home Government, of the local Authorities, or of the Proprietors resident in this country, 3000 miles from their estates, nothing can be easier than for the Managers on the spot to render those intentions completely abortive. Mr. De La Beche informs us, (p. 21,) that "the division of the people into gangs, according to their *age or strength*, is much the same in various parts of Jamaica." On his own estate, he says, (p. 6, 7,) they are divided into three gangs, the second consisting "of weakly adults, and young people *from ten to seventeen years of*

age; the small gang is formed of children *from six to nine years of age*, whose only work is to carry grass to the stable, and pick green slips and vines for the hogs, under the charge of a careful old woman." From the time, then, that a slave is six years of age until he is past work, "the harrassed and irritated master" needs never be at a loss for an excuse to detain him from attending on any moral or religious instruction which might be provided for him, either by private charity, or at the public expense.

Note W. page 31.

Colonists' own "Picture," pp. 145, 146.

Second Report of the Anti-slavery Society, p. 99: "Facts illustrative of the condition," &c. p. 9.

Note X. page 36.

"Thoughts on the necessity of improving the condition of the Slaves," &c. p. 3.

"The Slavery of the British West India Colonies delineated." Note at p. 207.—In fact, the inadmissibility of the evidence of Slaves against the Whites would, of itself alone, be sufficient to render almost any law that could be passed for their protection a dead letter,—a mere nullity.—See Note C.

Note Y. Page 36.

Such was the language held by Mr. Canning in a speech he delivered on the Slave-trade, in 1799. He also said, on the same occasion, "Trust not the masters of slaves in what concerns legislation for slavery. However specious their laws may appear, depend upon it they must be ineffectual in their operation. It is in the nature of things that they should be so."— "Let, then, the British House of Commons do their part themselves. Let them not delegate the trust of doing it to those who cannot execute that trust fairly. *Let the evil be remedied* by an assembly of freemen, *by the Government of a free people*, and not by the masters of slaves. Their laws can never reach, could never cure the evil."—Colonists' own "Picture," p. 131. The experience of the six and twenty years, which have elapsed since this language, so worthy a British senator, was uttered, concurs with that of all preceding ages to stamp on these sentiments the indelible character

of truth. How deeply is it to be regretted, that principles so admirable should never yet have been acted upon : that even to this day they should have done nothing towards the deliverance of nearly a million of our fellow-subjects from a state of merciless and hateful oppression !

Note Z. page 36.

“ If it be asked,” said Mr. Smith, the late devoted Missionary of Demerara, “ are there not authorities to whom the injured slaves can appeal for redress ? The answer is in the affirmative. But many of the legally constituted authorities are themselves owners of plantations, following the same system, and perhaps, by means of their managers, practising the same abuses on their slaves. Judging from their conduct, it would seem that some of them consider it a *greater crime for the Negroes to complain of their wrongs, than for the master to inflict them*. The complainants are almost sure to be flogged, and frequently before the complaint is investigated, if listening to the exculpatory tale of the master can be called an investigation ; and even when the case is so evidently on the side of the complainant that it can neither be denied or evaded, the decision is so studiously concealed from them, that *they scarcely know whether the law is to protect the oppressed, or to indemnify the oppressor* ; nor can they always solve the problem from the result.”—Colonists’ own “ Picture,” p. 32. The accuracy of these statements is but too fully verified by the facts detailed in the official Returns of the Fiscal of Berbice. For the description of this document, and for reference to some particular cases therein contained, illustrative of the truth of Mr. Smith’s allegations, see note D.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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